Design Resource

Mukaish Work of Lucknow

Embroidery with Metallic Wires

by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/mukaish-work-lucknow

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Introduction

The city of Lucknow blends royalty, culture and many religions into each other unlike anywhere else. Even while keeping pace with modern developments, it has preserved its golden past and its sublime culture - the Luckhnawi Tehzib.

Mukaish, an almost dying craft of Lucknow, is age-old embroidery where thin strips of metallic wire are inserted into the fabric and then twisted to create metallic embroidery. Very few karigars make exclusive Mukaish sarees as it is mostly done to highlight or adorn heavy Chikankari work. Over time, Chikankari travelled far and wide but Mukaish remained in Lucknow's narrow lanes. The karigars of this craft, also known as Badla in Gujarat and Maharashtra, are a dying breed.

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Place

Being the principal centre of the erstwhile Awadh province, Lucknow, situated on the banks of the river Gomti, is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. This 'golden city of east' is regarded as one of the finest cities of India. Having the most spectacular gardens, palaces, fine architectural mosques and temples, it is synonymous with cultural finesse, social warmth and an enduring love for gracious living. Chowk, as the name suggests, is a street in old Lucknow with the distinction of being the oldest in the city. Most of the Mukaish karigars live and work in the narrow lanes of this area itself.

A glimpse of Old Lucknow.

A glimpse of Old Lucknow.

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Fruit sellers in Old Lucknow.

Taanga ride in Old Lucknow.

Roomi Darwaaza.

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A glimpse of Old Lucknow.

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Workshops of the Mukaish karigars.

Mukaish karigars' workshop.

Karigars at their workshop or 'adda'.

Inside the adda.

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Workshops of the Mukaish karigars.

A glimpse of Old Lucknow.

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People

The people of Lucknow are among the warmest and the most courteous people in India. They are known to be very soft spoken and treat guests like Gods. The place has a rich cultural heritage and is popularly known as the city of Nawabs.

Considering the amount of time that goes into making Mukaish, which is an expensive and labour intensive craft, there are just a handful of craftsmen left in Lucknow, most of them being Muslims.

Karigar at work.

Karigar at work.

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Karigar at work.

Karigar at work.

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Karigar at work.

Karigar at work.

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Making Process

Chapaayi

Takaayi

Ghutaayi

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Chapaayi

Firstly, the motif or pattern to be embroidered is printed on the fabric (usually a pure chiffon or georgette) with a mix of 'neel' powder and gum. This could be transferred from a perforated paper stencil or block printed.

Pattern printed on the fabric to be embroidered.

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Pattern printed on the fabric to be embroidered.

Pattern printed on the fabric to be embroidered.

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Takaayi

In older times, clothes for the royalty were embroidered with silver wires. This got replaced by cheaper metals. Any metal is first stretched into strips that are passed through flames for different colors and cut in fine wires. These are then beaten with a tiny hammer for hours to produce a thin, papery density that can be used to embroider on the fabric.
There are two types of Mukaish work namely Fardi Ka Kaam and Kamdani.

• **Fardi Ka Kaam:**
Fardi, literally meaning dots, is the most basic yet beautiful type of Mukaish work. Dots are stitched in different sizes and patterns. The 'hazaar batti', thousand dots design in Fardi is characteristic of Lucknow. 'Tikki' (flat sequins) and 'challa' (rings) are used extensively to enhance the design. Size of the dot depends on the width of the wire used and is referred to as numbers - point 4 being the larger dot, point 2 smaller, point 1 being the smallest and most expensive dot. Fardi ka kaam is usually done by women from their homes.

Silver colored metallic strips for Fardi.

Threading the needle.

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'Challa' or ring being stitched.

Challa' or ring being stitched.

Challa' or ring being stitched.

Challa' or ring being stitched.

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Challa' or ring being stitched.

Challa' or ring being stitched.

'Fardi' or dots being embroidered.

'Fardi' or dots being embroidered.

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'Fardi' or dots being embroidered.

'Tikki' or flat sequins being stitched.

'Tikki' or flat sequins being stitched.

'Tikki' or flat sequins being stitched.

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'Tikki' or flat sequins being stitched.

'Fardi' or dots being embroidered.

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Pattern created with 'Fardi ka kaam'.

Pattern created with 'Fardi ka kaam'.

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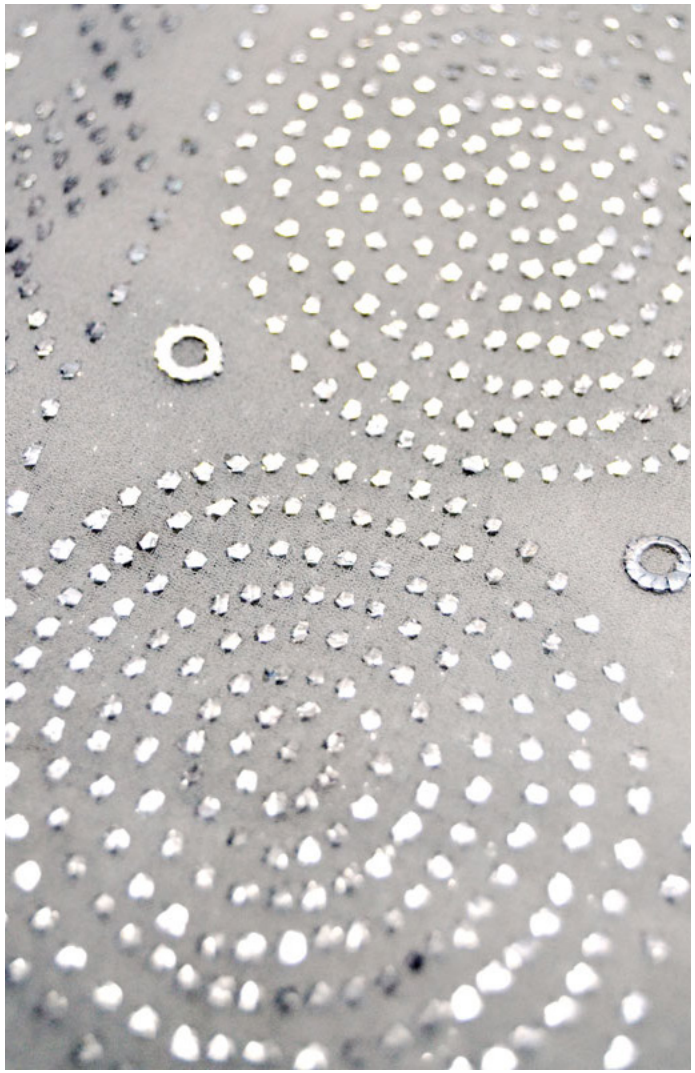
'Fardi ka kaam'.

Pattern created with 'Fardi ka kaam'.



Pattern created with 'Fardi ka kaam'.

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• **Kamdani:**
In Kamdani, the wire attached to a small length of thread is pulled through the fabric with a needle, beautifully working into motifs. This is also referred to as 'fancy kaam'. Kamdani is fast becoming a rarity and most of the craftsmen are elderly men.

Golden colored metallic strips for Kamdani.

Golden colored metallic strips for Kamdani.

Golden colored metallic strips for Kamdani.

Threading the needle.

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Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

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Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

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Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

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Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Embroidering the fabric with floral motif.

Details of 'fancy kaam' or Kamdani.

Details of 'fancy kaam' or Kamdani.

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Karigars at work.

Details of 'fancy kaam' or Kamdani.

Details of 'fancy kaam' or Kamdani.

Details of 'fancy kaam' or Kamdani.

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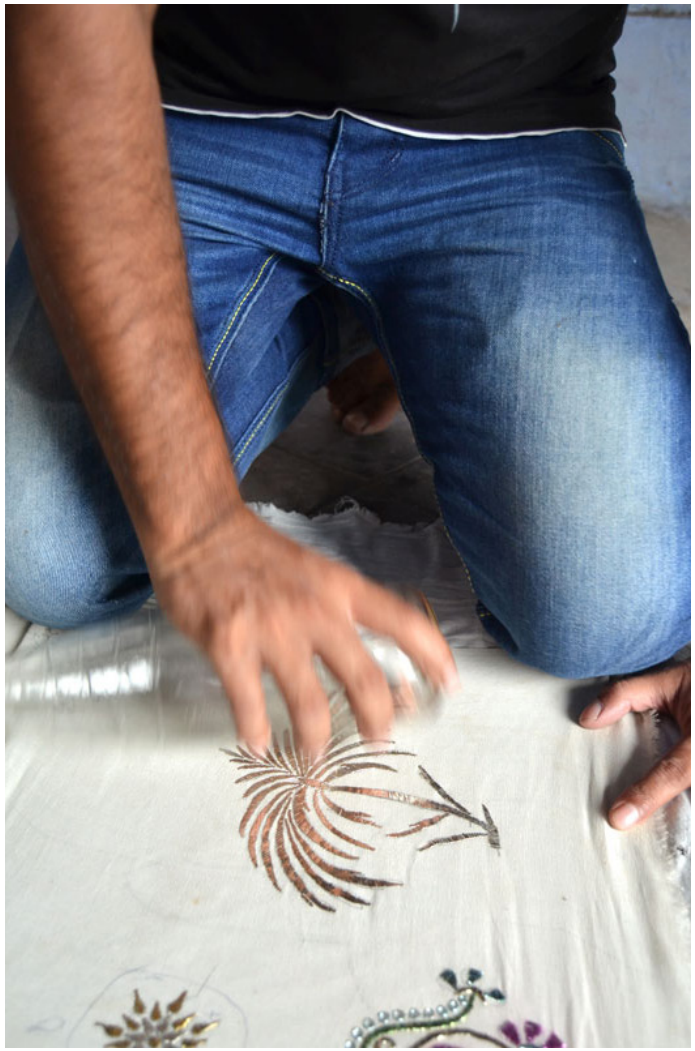
Ghutaayi

After the embroidery is done, the fabric is laid flat on a blanket and rubbed over with a cowrie shell or a glass bottle. This flattens and burnishes the wire, also leaving it brighter.

Fabric being rubbed with a glass bottle that will flatten and burnish the wire.



Fabric being rubbed with a glass bottle that will flatten and burnish the wire.

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Flattened wire.

Motif to be flattened by rubbing the glass bottle.

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Fabric being rubbed with a glass bottle that will flatten and burnish the wire.

Flattened and burnished motif.

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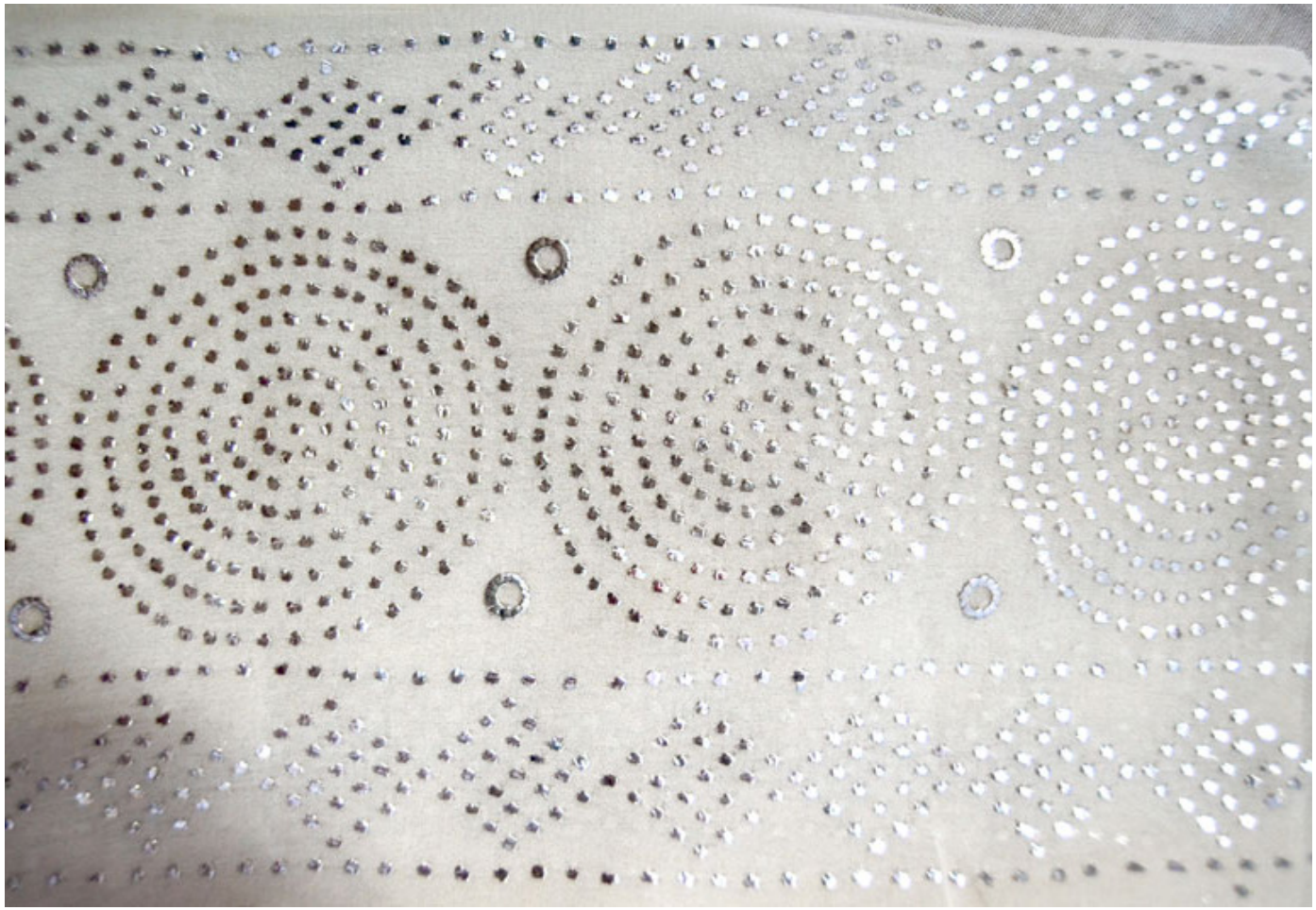
Products

The craftsmanship of Lucknow karigars is unparalleled. Usually heavy chikan-and-mukaish-work georgette sarees and lehengas are available in white and can be dyed in the color of one's choice. Some designers are also experimenting with different textile weaves and combining it with Mukaish work, sans Chikankari. Kurtis and dupattas are embroidered with multi-color threads as well. Lakhnawi products are exported the world over and are a must for the tourist who visits the city.



Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette saree.

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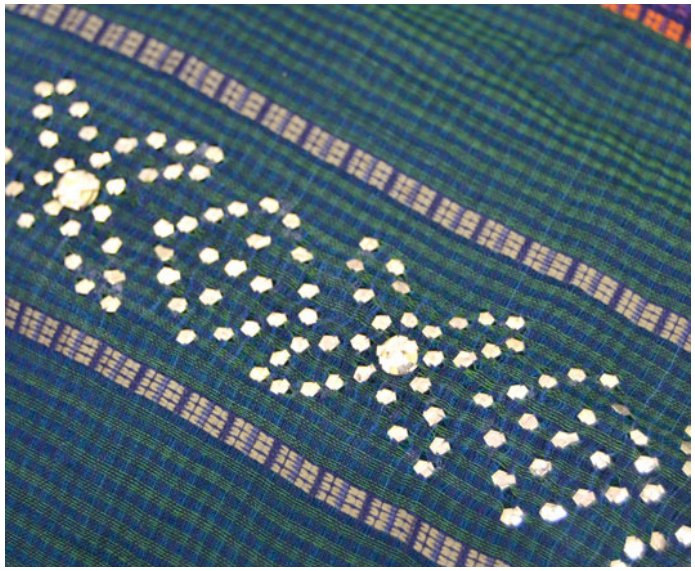

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a Maheshwari saree.

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Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a Maheshwari saree.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a South cotton saree.

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Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a Maheshwari saree.

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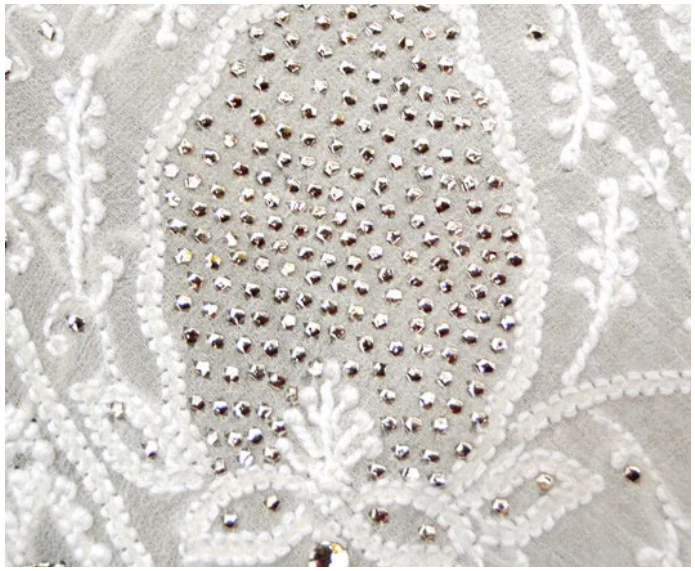
Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.



Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

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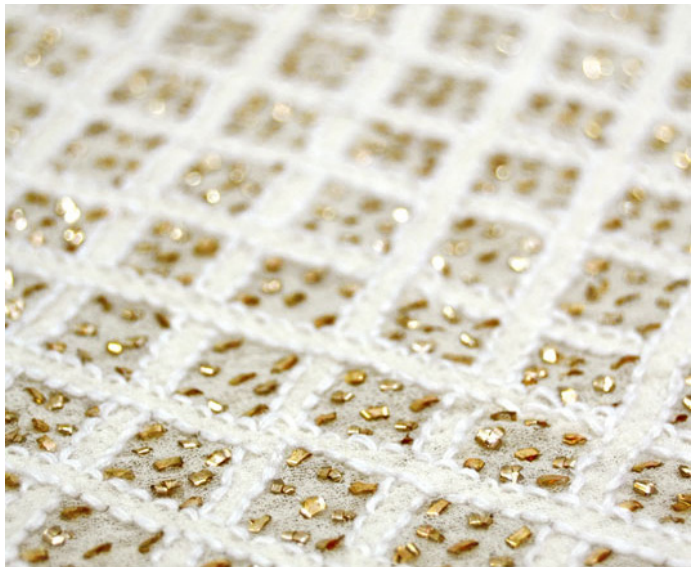
Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.



Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette saree.

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A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

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A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

A kurta piece with Fardi adornment.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

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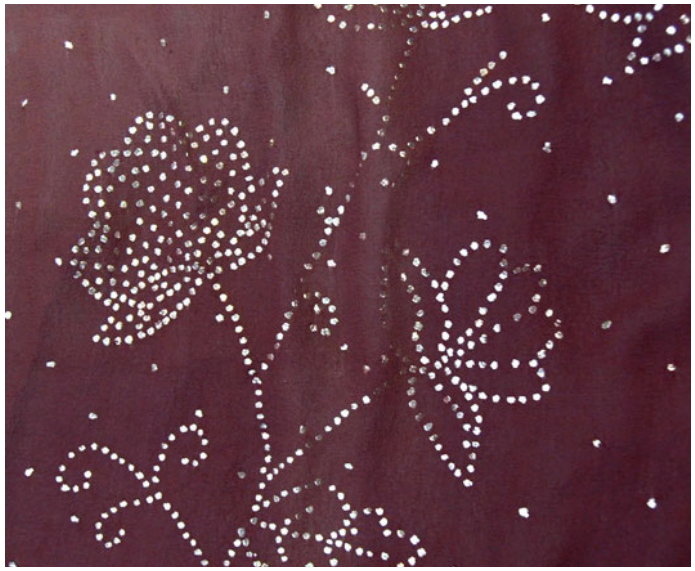
Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette saree.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.



Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a colored georgette saree.

Details of 'Fardi ka kaam' on a white georgette lehenga.

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Details of 'Kamdani' on a white georgette dupatta.

Details of 'Kamdani' on a white georgette anarkali suit.

Details of 'Kamdani' on a white georgette anarkali suit.

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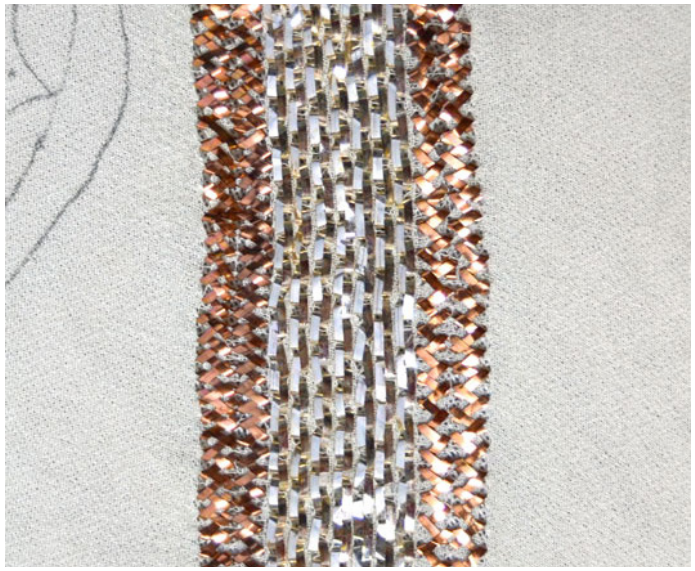
Details of 'Kamdani' on a white georgette anarkali suit.

Sample of Kamdani or 'fancy kaam'.

Sample of Kamdani or 'fancy kaam'.



Sample of Kamdani or 'fancy kaam'.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/mukaish-work-lucknow/products

1. Introduction
2. Place
3. People
4. Making Process
5. Products
6. Contact Details

Sample of Kamdani or 'fancy kaam'.

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Design Resource

Mukaish Work of Lucknow

Embroidery with Metallic Wires

by
Sakshi Gambhir
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/mukaish-work-lucknow/contact-details

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Sakshi Gambhir, IDC, IIT Bombay

You can get in touch with her at sakshigambhir[at]gmail.com

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Helpdesk Details:
Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
Industrial Design Centre
IIT Bombay
Powai
Mumbai 4000 076
India

Phone: 091-22-25767820/ 7801/ 7802
Fax: 091-22-25767803
Email: dsource.in[at]gmail.com